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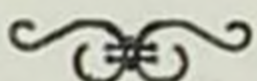
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Louisiana Purchase to 1838

In 1803 the United States bought from France the land that is now Iowa in the historic Louisiana Purchase. The price paid—including principal, interest, and private claims—totaled \$27.3 million, or an average of 3.6 cents an acre. Using this average price, the United States purchased the 35,700,000 acres now comprising the State of Iowa for \$1.3 million.

The Louisiana Purchase gave the United States sovereignty, or the right to rule the land, not own it. This country recognized the rights of the French and Spanish people living in the area and agreed to make treaties with the Indians, who, it was recognized, actually owned the title. A series of treaties negotiated between 1830 and 1851 extinguished Indian title to the lands in Iowa. The tribes affected included the Sauk and Fox, the Iowa, Winnebago, Sioux, and the Potawatomi. The price paid in Iowa ranged from one cent to 75 cents per acre, and the average for the entire state was about ten cents an acre.

A century later, in 1947, Congress enacted legislation allowing the Indians to sue the United States on any grievance they might have. All of the tribes in Iowa sued, their most important claim being that the Federal Government had not paid them a fair price for their lands when they sold them between 1830 and 1851.

Some of these Indian cases are still in the courts while others have been settled. An example of a settled case involves the Potawatomi tribe which by treaty obtained 5,000,000 acres in western Iowa in 1833 and sold it to the United States in the Treaty of 1846. The Potawatomi were paid 19 cents an acre for their 5,000,000 acres in the Treaty of 1846. After a long drawn-out legal suit over the 1846 valuation, including extensive appraisal evidence and exhibits, the Indian Claims Commission handed down a decision awarding the Potawatomi 75 cents an acre, or almost four times what they originally received for the land.

In the Indian treaties affecting Iowa lands, beginning with 1832, the major objective was to make the land available for settlement. Accordingly, the first task after treaty ratification was the official Government survey. This was the Rectangular Survey. It was based on township boundary and township subdivision surveys which divided the land into townships six miles square, into sections one mile square, and into quarter sections of approximately 160 acres. As a part of the Rec-

tangular Survey, the surveyors who did the field work were required to make notes as they traveled the township and section boundaries, and when they finished a township they usually wrote a summary description of the township covering the quality of the soil, the lay of the land, kinds and amount of timber, minerals if any, water courses and springs, and any other features of interest including any fields and farmsteads.

In addition to the above, the surveyors were required to prepare and submit a township plat showing important township features including timber, streams, ponds, marsh, roads and trails, location of fields and farmsteads, and the like. As a result of these original surveys, starting in the Black Hawk Purchase in 1836 and ending for the most part in northwest Iowa in 1859, a rich heritage of maps and descriptive notes are available for inspection. There are two sets—one in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and the other in the office of the Secretary of State in Des Moines, Iowa.

When the survey of a township was completed, and the land in the township was ready for sale to settlers and others by the Federal Government, all was ready for the first public land sales in Iowa in 1838.